

Our Community

NEWS

Reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area.

August 24, 2001

Volume 1 Number 5

Interview with Trustee DeLaney

by George Barnes

The year was 1971. Clint Eastwood introduced "Dirty Harry" to the movie public. "All In The Family" was the top-rated television show. Don McLean had a musical hit with an eight minute song titled, "American Pie" and Richard Milhous Nixon was voted *Time Magazine's* Man of the Year. It also was the year Ed DeLaney and his family arrived in the Tri-Lakes area, first residing in Palmer Lake, and then, in 1980, moving to the Town of Monument.

Ed's strong desire to contribute to the Monument community prompted him to serve on various Town committees and commissions. In 1989, he was appointed to fill a vacancy following the resignation of a Town Trustee. The next year, the voters elected Ed to his first four-year term as Trustee. He was reelected in 1994 and 1998. His current term expires in 2002.

When asked to point out one of the biggest problems facing the Town in 1990, Ed quickly stated, "Trying to get enough water...it was a serious problem. We raised rates in '89 and '90, but haven't raised them since. We now have built wells #7 and #8 and we've refurbished a couple of the older ones to get a higher volume of water. We presently have the ability to dig another well without having to go to the electorate for more bond issues. The tap fees we charge for new houses can be set aside to pay for a new well."

Another issue confronting the Town during Ed's first term as Trustee was a proposal to extend 2nd Street eastward to the Highway 105 bridge. "In '92 or '93, we had serious negotiations. The property was in El Paso County at that time and wasn't annexed into the Town until later." Unfortunately, the negotiations failed. "It took us a while to do this, but we went ahead last fall and this spring to start the proceedings for eminent domain and have been able to obtain the land." Due to these recent actions by the current Board of Trustees, the

Town will soon begin its long-awaited construction of the 2nd Street extension.

Ed believes growth is demanding more and more attention from the Town administrators. "I think all the Boards were good. It's just this current age of expansion. The local growth has been phenomenal and trying to stay up with it has been a lot more difficult than in the past." He says that particularly demanding is the management of the greatly increased traffic within the Town limits and the surrounding area. "Monument is the central focal point of northern El Paso County, Palmer Lake, Woodmoor, south Woodmoor, Kings Deer, all these areas. It all focuses on Monument. What we do here has an impact on what happens throughout the area. We have a lot more to look out for than just the Town."

Ed is justifiably proud of his role in obtaining the 2nd Street extension, developing the present water supply system, and leading the effort for the Home Rule Charter. Nonetheless, as many will attest, he still approaches his work the same way he has always done: He votes his conscience and

makes unbiased decisions based on what he believes is best for Monument and its residents. He is, however, concerned and perplexed by the recent public controversies surrounding the dismissal of ex-Chief of Police Al Sharon and the subsequent recall petitions directed against all but one of the Board members. "I don't think the people who initiated the recall spent enough time in Board meetings understanding what was really happening. I feel it was more emotions, especially after the Chief was fired. Many don't seem to know that I did not vote to dismiss him."

Betty Konarski, recently announced candidate for Mayor, stated in her official press release that the dedication Ed has shown to the Town of Monument should not be overlooked in the midst of this debate. Although she is on record as signing his recall petition when the signatures were gathered last April, she now feels he

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Interview with Trustee DeLaney

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should be allowed to complete his term.

When asked if he would run again for Trustee, Ed replied, "I feel 12 years is enough. The kind of hassle we've gotten in the past year...well, it's frankly disturbing." Because of the many hundreds of hours he has devoted to the Town over the past twenty years and the considerable administrative knowledge gained during that time, he finds it odd beyond belief that so much slander and misinformation has been spread about members of the present Board. "There are seven good people working on that Town Board, and they are trying to manage the Town for the good of the residents. To hog-tie them and nail them up on crosses for very low reasons...I just don't understand it."

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Letter from Trustee Morgan

The recall process is presently underway. The combined efforts of friends of the former Police Chief and friends of the former Mayor and trustees, who have been sniping at us for the past year, have resulted in a recall election scheduled for September 11th. Other than firing the Chief of Police, an action we indeed took and that has led to the betterment of the police force, the issues they raise are vague at best. I challenged the members of the Recall Committee, or those truly behind this action, their masters, to debate any or all of us face-to-face in order to articulate and support their charges. Thus far, the silence has been deafening. I doubt that the members of the Recall Committee, most of whom have attended only one or two Board of Trustees meetings, can detail the charges. Their masters claim to be doing that in their newsletter, *The Eye on Monument*, but their efforts tend more toward low farce and bad literature than cogent arguments in support of the recall charges. In the end, we can only glean the meaning of the charges from the

innuendo, rumors, and other nonsense printed in that newsletter and in the local newspaper. I suspect that details of our alleged transgressions will never be forthcoming. Innuendo and rumor are, after all, the weapons of cowards.

Superficially, it appears that those behind the recall are a rabble of property rights extremists, reactionary cranks, sore losers, paranoiacs, and their followers, who would like to return to the back-room deal days of old Monument politics. They would have us return to days when one Trustee, the *enfant terrible* of the Board, publicly bullied, baited, and belittled other Trustees, especially the female Board members. They would have us return to days when concrete plants, RV dealerships, and shoddy developments would have been approved with few questions asked. I doubt those are the days for which the voters of Monument yearn, but those who do, need only vote yes on the recall ballot.

Certainly Monument has its share of those I have stereotyped above. I believe, however, that there is a deeper reason, indeed a fear, that drives the ferocity of our opponents. (About a year ago many of us began referring to them as *The Dark Side*.) Their fear has to do with 'us versus them' feelings. I became aware of this shortly after moving here from Castle Rock in 1988. It had to do with demographic differences that were at that time more pronounced between the west ('us') and east ('them') sides of I-25. This feeling still persists for some long-time residents. One example can be seen in the rabid attacks *The Dark Side* has made on Mr. Heiser who, of course, is one of 'them' as he lives on the east side of I-25.

The current Board has tried to mitigate this attitude by inviting the input of residents of the entire Tri-Lakes area on development issues and by including the wider community in the creation of our new Comprehensive Plan. We recognize and are concerned that the decisions of the Monument Board of Trustees have terrific impact even on those who live outside the Town limits. The demographic pressures on Monument due to its desirability as a place to live, compared to much of the rest of the Front Range, are such as to drive the Town, including the historic downtown area, upscale. *The Dark Side* knows what this means. The recall election may be their last hurrah. Even if our opponents win on September 11th, they will eventually lose. The demographic pressures are irreversible and the days of *The Dark Side* are numbered.

W. Lowell (Skip) Morgan, Trustee, Town of Monument

The Monument Comp Plan

by Chris Pollard

How does a town or city normally develop? Usually, the sequence goes from settlement to village to town and then to city. Growth usually centers around the original settlement and works outwards from there. An example of this is Colorado Springs. But what about Monument? In this case, much of the area outside the Town's boundaries is already developed so we have the unusual situation of developing the inside instead of the outside.

How can we do this? Do we just let it happen, approve whatever comes along, and hope what we end up with is a useful mix that will serve us for the future? Will the developer build a suitable number of parks, trails and bicycle paths and other amenities that would be useful? If we have an idea of what we want Monument to look like in the future, having a good Comprehensive Plan can guide us to achieve that. Other towns have had plans they executed with success. You may not like the end result, but they did achieve it. Broomfield wanted to have a large regional mall so they helped finance the roads and other infrastructure. Boulder wanted to control its growth so it set up boundaries and bought open space. The Colorado Springs Economic Development Council markets the area to people it would like to attract.

In Monument, a group of people is working with the Town Planning Department on an update to the Comprehensive Plan to guide the development of Monument. They are trying to make sure we have a reasonable balance between services, amenities, housing, shopping and all the other things that make a community.

Surely you have seen parts of towns you liked, where you felt comfortable. Do you like to see rows of same design, same color condominiums? Do you like older downtown Monument where each house is a different style and color? Do you prefer trees surrounding office buildings or want to have a heavy industrial plant close to downtown? It is possible to influence where we go in the future. Do we want, for example, to specialize? Palmer Lake has an artistic bent. Do we want to become a musical center, using the excellence of the local school music programs as a building block?

If you are interested in contributing to the future of Monument and have some ideas for what would make the final result a great place to live, contact Monument Assistant Town Manager and Planner Mike Davenport at 481-2954. As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, there will be an important public meeting on the future of downtown Monument on Thursday, August 30th, 5 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St.

What is NEPCO?

by Russ Broshous

NEPCO is an acronym for the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations. NEPCO is a coalition of homeowners' associations. In less than one year as an organization, NEPCO has grown to include 20 homeowners' associations representing about 15,000 residents in the Tri-Lakes area. NEPCO's mission is to enhance the quality of life of its member associations and their residents in a wide variety of areas. Some of these are listed below with example issues we have addressed:

- *Growth and Development* – Is it appropriate and beneficial to the community for a Wal-Mart or a concrete batch plant to be located in the Tri-Lakes area before all related development issues (traffic, drainage, aesthetics, etc.) are agreed to and funding identified and committed to address them? Even then, are their proposed locations appropriate given their proximity to comparatively dense residential areas or irreplaceable scenic vistas?
- *Community Cohesion* – Is the local media addressing critical issues in an objective, factual manner or do the local publications seek to take one position or the other, dividing the community into disparate, warring factions? To this end, NEPCO applauds the staff of *Our Community News* for printing and distributing a publication that offers fact, not innuendo and half-truths.
- *Good Government* – Does the County Land Use review process work to the benefit of all in our area or does it seem slanted toward development come-what-may? Can NEPCO contribute to assure that the voices of its members are heard? NEPCO now does just that at the County and State levels, with the County having accepted the organization last year as a point of coordination for all new developments planned for the Northern El Paso County area.

Focusing on the third area for a moment, especially in light of the recall vote now hanging over the Town of Monument, we must mention up front that NEPCO is non-partisan and takes no side in this matter. In fairness, though, we feel obligated to state that, in our view, the current Town Board of Trustees collectively has accomplished much that is positive for the Town and surrounding area.

For example, the Moratorium and the ensuing review of the Town's Comprehensive plan and the planning process, itself were long overdue. If anyone doubts this, just remember Transit Mix. Moreover, the Moratorium took a substantial measure of political courage,

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What is NEPCO?

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especially in the face of irate developers threatening legal action at every turn. For another example, the Town acted deliberately and aggressively to correct deficiencies within the Town's financial and administrative apparatus including its police force. This series of actions will be of substantial long-term benefit to Town residents, even though there appears to be unavoidable disruption in taking the cure.

There are some negatives. It's pretty clear to all, for example, that the Town Board of Trustees and Manager have failed to communicate well with residents during these necessary changes. Clearly, much of the current commotion stems from this failing. It seems equally clear, though, that the Town Board recognizes this issue because they have instituted a periodic Town newsletter to keep residents informed. This is all to the good.

The recall petitions cite four reasons for the action: Too many executive sessions; Purported insensitivity in dealing with Town employees; Termination of the Police Chief; and Alleged mismanagement of Town resources. From our vantage point, the State's 'sunshine law' is very specific about what can and cannot be discussed in closed session and we have heard of no legal findings or objections to any specific instances when the current Town Board held closed sessions. As to dealing with employees, correcting deficiencies in any organization often results in unhappy or even terminated employees. This should not be a surprise to anyone. Finally, from our reading of a recent Town newsletter that addresses the grants and loans the Town Board has secured from various sources, it appears the Town administration is more apt to be "guilty" of adding money to Town coffers than they are of mismanaging it.

Whatever one's view of these issues may be, in the interest of good government, we urge all Monument residents to carefully consider the issues at stake and the motives of the residents (and non-residents) raising them. We also urge residents to consider whether such an extreme measure as recall is an appropriate method of sending a message to Town elected officials who have done so many positive things for the Town and, indeed, the whole Tri-Lakes area. Then cast your vote.

Apart from the current hubbub, for those residents living in sub-divisions with a formal or informal homeowners' group interested in exploring NEPCO's program, please feel free to contact me at 488-0074.

Emergency Services

by Rebecca Hicks

Growth and the development of new neighborhoods in northern El Paso County has the region's three emergency services providers revisiting a decade-old debate over consolidation.

The Woodmoor-Monument and Tri-Lakes fire protection districts and the Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department have renewed discussions about combining operations, including manpower, equipment and financial resources.

A consultant has submitted a bid for \$26,780 to prepare a comprehensive evaluation of the three departments including a cooperative services feasibility study, according to David R. Youtsey, Fire Chief with the Woodmoor-Monument Fire Protection District. Youtsey has long considered consolidation the most efficient means of providing emergency services to the fast-growing region that includes Monument, Palmer Lake, Woodmoor and new developments, such as Kings Deer, Bent Tree and Jackson Creek. "Yes, we actively support consolidation," Youtsey said. "We have been working with that goal in mind for years."

The towns of Monument and Palmer Lake have agreed to support a study and possible consolidation of the three fire protection entities. "We'd like to see where our strengths and weaknesses are," said Della Gins, Palmer Lake Town Clerk. "It would help our department out considerably." Gins noted that the Town government adopted a resolution two years ago to support consolidation. She added that it has approval for a \$5,000 grant toward the cost of a feasibility study.

The Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, however, is more cautious about joining its colleagues to hire a consultant, who might ultimately recommend combining the three departments. "It's not a dead issue by any means," said Oscar Gillespie, President of the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Board of Directors. "But we have a lot of information to gather and decide whether or not to do that. I have to look at this as a taxpayer and Board President, and its effect on property taxes, the fire department, and personnel."

At its July Board meeting, the Tri-Lakes District agreed to explore the costs of a separate, in-house study that would examine how the Tri-Lakes District could improve services, Gillespie said. "We would look in-house at where we could improve services, whether through consolidation or other means." He added that the Board did not allocate sufficient funds in its current budget to participate in the cooperative study with the

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Woodmoor-Monument and Palmer Lake departments.

Some officials, however, believe that Tri-Lakes may be dragging its feet on the issue and needs a push from residents and homeowners' associations. "The institutional biases of the fire districts are preventing this from happening," said Russ Broshous, President of NEPCO [see the story starting on page 3]. "The question is, who is going to push it?" Broshous believes residents must put pressure on the districts to cooperatively address the inefficiencies and inadequacies of emergency services in the area. He cited differences in emergency services training, expansive geography, and the duplication of major equipment expenditures. "Our presumption is that the constituents have to put heat on these boards to make something happen," Broshous said. "Being a resident within the Woodmoor district, my sense is that the Woodmoor-Monument District's heart is in the right place, but they're reluctant to take action that puts them at odds with their fellow fire districts."

Currently, the Woodmoor-Monument Fire Protection District is charged with providing services in a nine square mile area of Woodmoor and the majority of neighborhoods in Monument east of the railroad tracks. While its primary function is fire prevention and protection, about 65 percent of its calls are for medical emergencies, not including traffic accidents, according to Youtsey.

When the District receives a medical emergency call, it responds with a paramedic. An ambulance from American Medical Response follows to provide transportation of the patient. According to Ted Sayer, AMR operations manager, the ambulance service has an on-time performance of 93.3 percent. It has a contract with the El Paso County Emergency Services Agency to respond to an urban area call, such as in Woodmoor, within 20 minutes or less. The average response time for the Woodmoor-Monument area is 9.1 minutes, with the majority of ambulances coming from Donald Wescott Station #3 near Gleneagle Drive and Baptist Road.

Sayer admitted that growth in northern El Paso County has challenged his operations but said it also has resulted in benefits. "As there is growth through the north, we've had to expand our coverage. The ambulance off Baptist Road is a good example. There are challenges as far as traffic, roads and staffing, but our performance today is better than a year or two ago."

Youtsey noted that the District's statistics reflect the

population growth. In 1990, the Woodmoor-Monument District responded to 214 medical and fire calls. For 2000, calls had increased 168 percent to 575.

The District has 14 full-time employees, including an operational staff of 12. Four line firefighters are on duty per 24-hour shift, including at least one of their five paramedics. All medical response personnel are certified in Advanced Life Support. The station on Woodmoor Drive houses one pumper truck, one brush truck to respond to wildfires, and one Aerial Quint equipped with a 75-foot ladder.

Operations in the Woodmoor-Monument District currently are supported through a property tax levy of 9.5 mills. A mill is one-tenth of a cent or \$1 for each \$1,000 taxable value of property. The District's highest levy was in 1983 at 11.2 mills.

Palmer Lake's Volunteer Fire Department and the Tri-Lakes District also have experienced the challenges of expanding neighborhoods.

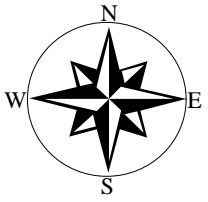
The Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District covers 45 square miles, including an area from Highway 83 to Pike National Forest and from County Line Road to the North Entrance of the Air Force Academy. Among its equipment are a 50-foot ladder truck and three ambulances, two of which are in service. Since it opened its new firehouse on Highway 105 near Palmer

Lake, a crew person mans the station 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to respond to calls. According to Board President Gillespie, the District has nine paid personnel and 32 volunteers. Three members are paramedics and the others are emergency medical technicians or have received a Basic or higher level of training. Several are certified to give IV's or can operate on their own but are unable to administer heart drugs. Response times average five to seven minutes, with at least one EMT or paramedic answering the call. A property tax levy of 7 mills supports operations.

In contrast, Palmer Lake's all-volunteer department operates from a small budget of \$41,535, which is allocated through the Town government. Assistant Fire Chief Julie Lokken noted that the Town relies on 25 volunteer firefighters from Palmer Lake and an ambulance from the Tri-Lakes District to transport patients.

"..the constituents have to put heat on these [fire protection district] boards to make something happen..."

- Russ Broshous,
NEPCO President



Our Community News

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**Reporting on
Tri-Lakes Area Issues**

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August 24, 2001

Our Community News

Our Continuing Mission

by Roth Hyland, Publisher, and Judy Barnes, Editor

Despite some personnel changes, we have stayed true to our mission as stated in our first issue: "To bring you facts, issues, and viewpoints all too often ignored or suppressed by the local one-sided media." Our goal is to give you an accurate, alternative source of information to help you reach sound conclusions.

We have been accused of being liberal or, worse yet, liberal democrats. Preservation of our quality of life is not a partisan issue, and anyone who tries to make it one wants to divert attention from the very real issues of growth this area faces. That such an argument would be used shows just how desperate and out of touch the local advocates of "growth at any cost" are. They will use any argument, no matter how threadbare, to try to regain power and turn back the clock.

We continue to urge you to take the time to go to public meetings and get the facts first-hand. We want to hear from you. This is your community. Your voice matters. You can make a difference by working to ensure that we hold on to the things we love about living here.

Calendar of public meetings

- **Woodmoor-Monument FPD Board Meeting**, Mon., Aug. 27, 9 am, 1855 Woodmoor Drive. Info: 488-3303.
- **Monument Comprehensive Plan - Future of Downtown**, Thu., Aug. 30, 5 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: 481-2954.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Workshop**, Thu., Sep. 6, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: 481-2953. Transit Mix concrete plant proposal may be discussed.
- **Special Monument Recall Election**, Tue., Sep. 11, 7 am to 7 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: 481-2954.
- **Monument Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Sep. 12, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: 481-2954.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Workshop**, Wed., Sep. 12, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: 481-2953.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council**, Thu., Sep. 13, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: 481-2953. Transit Mix concrete plant proposal may be discussed.
- **Monument Board of Trustees**, Mon., Sep. 17, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: 481-2954.

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